

## Roberttown CE (vc) J&I School Governor School Visit Record

<b>Name:</b> Jonathan Pickles	<b>Date:</b> 03/11/21
<b>Purpose of visit:</b>	
To explore how the school was progressing with regards to developing its curriculum.	
<b>Structure/Timetable of the visit:</b>	
9-9.30am	Tour of the school with Mrs Wood- Mrs Frost in class
9.30-10.30am	General curriculum development update – Mrs Wood <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Updated progressions &amp; rationales</li> <li>• Next steps</li> </ul>
10.30-10.50am	Playtime
11am	Subject Leader Meetings: progress & challenges: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PSE- Mrs Baker- no cover needed</li> <li>• Maths- Mrs Glaves- Mrs Frost</li> <li>• Geography/History- Miss Wiles- Ms Oldfield</li> </ul>
11.45am	Meeting with Mrs Smith & Mrs Wood
<b>Key Staff to see:</b>	
<b>Position</b>	<b>Name</b>
See above timetable.	
<b>Key Questions/Issues for Governors to explore:</b>	
How is the development of the curriculum progressing?	
What are the key focusses for the school going forward to develop the curriculum further?	

## **Governor's Observations/Evaluation**

The day began with a tour of the school, visiting each classroom and a description of each cohort being shared. What was particularly clear from this was the increasing challenges the school faces, particularly supporting an increasing number of pupils with high level additional needs. The pressures of staffing were also clear. Staffing is extremely tight in the school so whenever a member of staff is absent (an increasing situation particularly with Covid cases), support staff and/or cover supervisors are required to support/teach in another class. Clearly, the more this situation arises, the greater the impact is on pupil progress.

Mrs Wood then shared examples of vision statements and rationales for each individual subject. In each subject, the vision statement presents the ideal the end point for every pupil; the skills, abilities, knowledge and love for the subject they hope to develop. The rationale focuses much more practically on how this will be achieved. These rationales have been redeveloped in light of some recent training, highlighting how the SLT is continually reflecting and looking to enhance the school's curriculum.

The meeting then progressed to focus on future developments of the curriculum. A conversation was held around reading and it became very clear that is a priority focus for the school. The school has recently purchased one of the new DfE recommended phonics schemes and all staff are taking part in the required training irrespective of whether they directly teach phonics. Mrs Wood is also working hard to ensure a range of quality texts are used throughout school. This involves creating a list of four, core texts for each year group. These are books that the children will learn in detail – likely to be in English lessons – and are intended to be books and stories that the children can remember in detail as they grow up. These books will then be supported by another group of texts for each year group that children are expected to read. Many of these books are likely to be studied in English lessons but will also be available for pupils in the reading corner of their class.

The conversation then progressed to looking forwards and identifying the next steps and challenges that the school face. One of the main challenges is for the school to move from a thematic approach to discrete lessons for all subjects. In KS2 this is more straightforward (aside from the practical work and planning!), however in KS1 this presents much more significant challenges; ensuring the children in mixed age classes access the correct work for the curriculum year group. Mrs Wood spoke about the need to visit other schools who have experience of managing this situation. Further challenges include continuing to develop the rationales for the school curriculum, implementing the new phonics scheme and continuing to support pupils in their catch-up from Covid to ensure they reach their targets.

At breaktime we went outside and observed children completing the daily mile and observed UKS2 break. Pupil behaviour was good amongst the children and it was notable how good the manners were from the many children that came over and spoke.

After break I held three conversations with three different subject leads. First was Mrs Glaves where we discussed maths. Mrs Glaves spoke about the challenges that were faced throughout school posit Covid. She explained that many children across school had maintained a good level of fluency but children's ability to reason and problem solve had been affected (along with independent working). There were also the problems of specific gaps where work had been missed. This was being managed by adapting current planning to explore concepts in greater detail, including starting the planning with the previous year group objectives. Alongside the continuing work to help support pupils catch up, is checking and developing links within the EYFS in the context of the new EYFS framework.

The next conversation was with Mrs Baker who shared the journey she had been on with PSHE. The school have recently adopted a new scheme of work, now using 'Jigsaw.' This had initially

been trialled with Mrs Baker's own class last year and she found the children had reacted very positively to the scheme and approach. The scheme also provides a curriculum for EYFS meaning there is clear progression through the whole school and covers all the legal requirements (including RSE and First Aid). The scheme is also fully resourced which helps teachers manage their workload. Throughout the conversation it was very clear that Mrs Baker held a strong passion for the subject and was also very aware of the next steps. Alongside supporting other members of staff introduce the new scheme there is a focus on developing assessment at the end of units of work to check on pupil progress.

The final conversation was with Miss Wiles about Geography and History. She shared some of the work that had been put into Geography, including purchasing a mapping tool called Digimap that provides a range of tools, including providing historical maps of locations, the ability to draw and illustrate, all very good tools to enhance teaching. Further steps in Geography were to ensure that there were plenty of opportunities for the children to experience fieldwork opportunities. In History, Miss Wiles explained the school were focussing on an enquiry-based approach in lessons. They are also ensuring the curriculum is not just focussing on knowledge but also developing the skills required for the children to be Historians. The school has also taken the decision not to take a chronological approach to the sequencing of History, instead focussing around linking units around key dates. The next steps in History involve focussing on ensuring there are plenty of opportunities to establish links and provide opportunities for pupils to revisit prior learning.

The morning concluded with a short meeting with Mrs Smith and Mrs Wood to feedback. There were many positives that I identified including a clear focus from the SLT on what the next steps were. It was also clear from the subject leaders I spoke to that there was strong subject leadership. Each member of staff understands what is expected from them and all could clearly articulate how they were monitoring their subject and what their next steps are.

### **Culture observed in the school**

Throughout the morning there was a lovely atmosphere through school. Children in reception and Y1 were enjoying a morning of activities looking at Guy Fawkes, including taking part in a session with a special guest. This positive feeling was existed through all the classes we visited. All the children I spoke to were very well mannered and polite.

### **Any Key Issues Arising for the Governing Body:**

Going forward the key issues for the Governing Body are to continue to explore how the school is continuing to support pupils to 'catch-up' following Covid and how the curriculum continues to develop. A further visit later in the school year would be good to see how things have continued to progress.

Whist the above point is extremely important and the need to continue this work is vital. Governors must also be mindful of the fact that the ongoing complications of Covid, such as enhanced lengths of time that staff may be absent alongside the day-to-day challenges that are continually faced do not make this an easy task at all.

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<b>Action Following Governing Body Meeting:</b>
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<b>Signed: Jonathan Pickles, Governor</b>
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